



Draft Planning Document for the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife Berkshire Highlands Forest Management Zone

MassWildlife is working to create a series of planning documents that cover all forested portions of the 130,000 acres of state wildlife lands in Massachusetts. MassWildlife has established nine forest management zones ([see below](#)) that are based on Massachusetts ecological regions (ecoregions). The draft plan for the Berkshire Highlands Forest Management Zone (FMZ) will be the first of nine such plans statewide, and represents the second step in a planning process for this area that began with an

ecoregional assessment for the entire Berkshire area that was prepared through the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (see: <http://www.mass.gov/envir/forest/>).

A [complete draft of the Berkshire Highlands plan](#) is tentatively scheduled to be posted here on or about Monday, September 19, 2005 in preparation for a public meeting to review the plan on Thursday evening, September 29, 2005 at the DCR Regional Office on Route 7 in Pittsfield, MA. The draft plan incorporates comment received at an initial public meeting to discuss planning for MassWildlife lands in the Berkshire Highlands that was held at the DCR Regional Office on February 24, 2005. MassWildlife will take oral public comments in Pittsfield on September 29, and will take written comments through November 14, 2005. Written comments can be sent to: John Scanlon, MassWildlife Forest Project Leader, Field Headquarters, Westborough, MA 01581, or can be emailed to john.scanlon@state.ma.us.

The draft Berkshire Highlands plan will cover 33 MassWildlife properties totaling >36,000 acres in portions of the Western and Connecticut Valley Districts. The draft plan will address:

- Goals and Objectives for MassWildlife lands in the Berkshire Highlands FMZ.
- Landuse History & Natural Disturbance Processes.
- Current Forest Resource Conditions
- Forest Structure and Composition Goals
- Active and Passive Management Sites
- Rare Species Protection
- Soil & Water Quality
- Forest Recreation & Public Access
- Conservation of Historic & Cultural Resources
- Public Outreach & Comment Process

Active and passive management sites involve timber harvesting on MassWildlife lands that benefits native wildlife species associated with young forest habitat, and proposed forest reserves involving MassWildlife lands and/or DCR state forestlands in Cheshire, Windsor, Middlefield, Chesterfield, and Otis. The public meeting in Pittsfield on September 29 will also cover forest management planning for state forestlands in the DCR Central Berkshire Region (see: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/>).

